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INVESTIGATIONS

Between Two Fires

(See Cover)

Marina Oswald, 22, sat at a table in Parchey's Restaurant in Washington. Ten feet away were two vigilant Secret Service agents. Slight and slim at about 5 ft. 2 in. and 98 lbs., she had had her hair set in a beauty parlor—something her late husband would not have allowed. She wore touches of makeup—something her husband had frowned upon. She lit a cigarette and smoked it—something he had disapproved of.

Lee Harvey Oswald had disapproved of drinking too. Now she asked for a vodka gimlet but did not like it. She took a sip from the old-fashioned of a newsman at the table with her, made a face and handed it back, finally settling for a cherry cordial. She was not very hungry, and ate little of her filet mignon with mushroom sauce.

At her side in a high chair was the older of her two daughters, June Lee, called Junie and three years old this week. The child chattered in Russian, banged the silverware on the table, sampled the vodka, played with the butter. The restaurant was out of spaghetti and meatballs, Junie's favorite dish, so she was served hamburger, which she crumbled and carefully dropped on the floor, piece by piece. Junie looks like her father.

Marina Oswald calmed the child, returned to the conversation. She was convinced that her husband had killed President John Kennedy. But why?

In her halting English, she painfully tried to explain. "It is very difficult question," she said. "He was not too much. Sometimes he was a little bit sick. He was a normal man, but sometimes people don't understand him. And sometimes I didn't know . . . He want to be popular, so everyone know who is Lee Harvey Oswald.

"I am sleepy, I am tired. I want to go to bed. I am going to sleep all day Saturday."

The Witness. There was good cause for her weariness. For the past four days, Marina had testified before the special commission, headed by Chief Justice Earl Warren, that is conducting a long, painstaking investigation into the Kennedy assassination. For the most part, she merely substantiated the mass of evidence already compiled by the FBI (in five volumes of reports), the Secret Service, and a dozen investigative lawyers hired by the commission itself. That evidence—ranging from fingerprints to ballistics tests—is as conclusive as any confession, and there is no lingering doubt about what the commission's main findings will be:

- Lee Harvey Oswald killed Kennedy and wounded Texas' Governor John Connally, and he carried out the assassination without an accomplice.
- There was no dark conspiracy. Oswald was neither a Soviet nor a Cuban agent. There was no plot instigated by right-wingers (as the radical left has claimed) or by left-wingers (as the radical right insists). Similarly, Oswald's own assassination was the work of just one man, Jack Ruby, and [illegible] (as Moscow intimated at the time) staged with the connivance of the Dallas police.

The Commission. So wild had the speculation about Kennedy's assassination become that a Black Muslim newspaper even reported that the President, dying of cancer and desiring martyrdom, had ordered his own slaying. And it was to set such nonsense to rest that President Johnson, on Nov. 29, established the Warren Commission.

Earl Warren, 72, undertook the assignment with great reluctance. In the past, Supreme Court Justices occasionally have accepted extrajudicial chores: Justice Robert Jackson was chief U.S. prosecutor at the Nürnberg trials; Owen Roberts was head of the Pearl Harbor investigating commission. But Warren held the traditional view that the federal judiciary—especially the Supreme Court—ought not to move out of its well-defined limits. In 1958 Warren had turned down a suggestion that he, or any member of the Court, join a committee to study the question of presidential disability. Moreover, he knew that litigation arising from the November events in Dallas—the Jack Ruby case, for one—might some day come before the Supreme Court. If that happened, he would almost certainly have to disqualify himself.

Nevertheless, in a White House meeting, President Johnson insisted that the national interest required a man in Warren's position and with his reputation to head the investigation. Warren finally agreed, but when he left Johnson's office there were tears in his eyes.

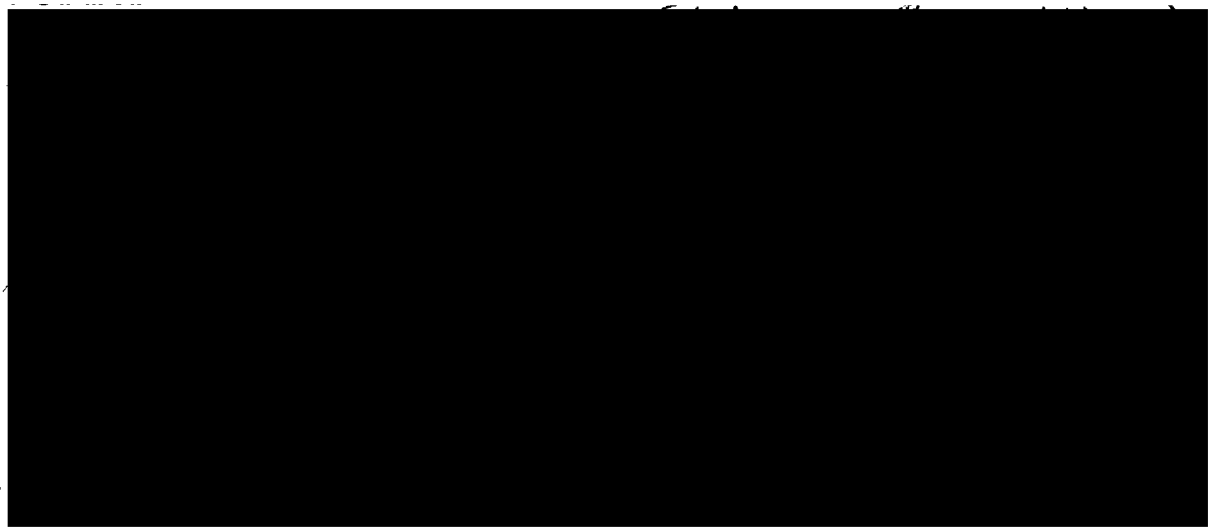
Other members of the commission are Georgia's Democratic Senator Richard B. Russell, 66, who chaired the 1951 congressional investigation into President Truman's dismissal of General Douglas MacArthur; Kentucky's Republican Senator John Sherman Cooper, 62, a former state judge and Ambassador to India; Louisiana's Democratic Congressman Hale Boggs, 50, a lawyer and the House Democratic whip; Michigan's Republican Congressman Gerald Ford, 50, Yale Law School graduate and one of the G.O.P.'s most respected House members; Allen W. Dulles, 70, former head of the Central Intelligence Agency; and John J. McCloy, 68, retired chairman of the Chase Manhattan Bank, onetime U.S. High Commissioner in West Germany and John Kennedy's disarmament adviser.

Named chief counsel to the commission was James Lee Rankin, 56, a Manhattan attorney who was Eisenhower's Solicitor General. Rankin ranks high in Supreme Court circles, argued for the Government in the 1953 school desegregation cases, in the Little Rock high school litigation, defended Ike's right to invoke the Taft-Hartley law in the 1959 steel strike.

Month's Rent. Using a rented suite of offices in Washington's Veterans of Foreign Wars Building, the commission [illegible] Oswald through the story of her life—and her days with

Continued

LEE & MARINA'S WEDDING DAY IN MINSK (1961)
Even then, something mysterious and unstable.



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